

REMARKS

Claims 1-10, 12, 14-16 and 18-20 are now pending, including independent claims 1 and 10. Claims 1, 6, 10, 14, and 20 are amended herein. Claims 11, 13 and 17 are canceled.

Claims 1-3 and 6-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 in light of Bradley. Claims 4-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 in light of Bradley in view of Smith. Claims 1-3, 7-15, and 17-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 in light of Mitsubishi. Claims 6 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 in light of Mitsubishi in view of Bradley.

Independent Claims 1 and 10

It is respectfully asserted that independent claims 1 and 10 as amended each contain elements not taught or suggested in the cited references either singularly or in combination.

With regard to claim 1, it is noted that the claim includes a pocket connector and the pocket connector comprises a lock feature and the claim includes “the size and shape of the lock feature of the pocket connector being configured to engage the tongue connector and to prevent disengagement in a vertical direction.” As amended, claim 1 now includes “the lock feature being a region of the pocket connector that is sized smaller than the slot feature and being movable such that a tongue connector of another lawn edging may move the lock feature.”

Similarly, claim 10 includes “providing a locking mechanism on the pocket connector, the locking mechanism hindering the disengagement of two engaged flexible bodies in a vertical direction.” As amended, claim 10 also now includes “the locking mechanism being a region of the pocket connector that is sized smaller than a slot feature of the pocket connector and being movable such that a tongue connector of another lawn edging may move the locking mechanism.”

It is respectfully noted that none of the cited prior art, singularly or in combination, provide for a locking mechanism on a pocket that is sized smaller than a slot and that is movable such that a tongue connector may move the locking mechanism.

With respect to Bradley, it is respectfully noted that Bradley shows a slot 104 in a flap 106 which may receive a corresponding extension member 102 in a downward vertical movement manner. However, the extension member 102 is not locked in any manner in the vertical direction by any structure of the slot 104 or the flap 106. As noted, the slot 104 and flap 106 of Bradley contain no mechanism to lock in the vertical direction. No locking mechanism of Bradley is formed on the pocket to be smaller than the slot or movable such that a tongue connector may move the locking mechanism.

With respect to Mitsubishi, it is noted that the pocket end 18 (Figures 6 and 7 of Mitsubishi) appears to be merely a rectangular slot with no portion sized smaller than the slot and no portion appears to be movable such that a tongue connector of another lawn edging may move the locking mechanism.

With regard to Smith, it is noted that a securing aperture 32 (Figure 2 of Smith) is provided and that the aperture does include a narrowing region. However, the aperture 32 of Smith is not formed in a pocket connector and is not taught to be movable when engaged by a connector. Rather, a user would merely engage the aperture 32 and projection 30 by moving the projection 30 in a direction perpendicular to the body of the edging such that no deformation of the aperture 32 would be required.

As such, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1 and 10 and all other claims now pending which depend therefrom are patentably distinct from the prior art.

Dependent Claims

With regard to dependent claim 2, it is noted that claim 2 includes a “guide feature to guide the tongue connector...towards the lock feature.” It is respectfully submitted that none of the cited art singularly or in combination discloses a guide feature for guiding the tongue connector and does not therefore disclose a guide feature that guides a tongue connector towards the lock feature. Bradley and Mitsubishi disclose connectors that only include slots without any guiding features. Likewise, the connectors of Smith do not disclose any guiding feature.

Similar to claim 2, it is noted that claim 14 also includes “the pocket connector further comprises a guide.”

With regard to dependent claim 3, it is more particularly noted that the pocket connector includes a flap that has a notch formed wherein the notch defines the guide feature, the lock feature and the slot feature. None of the cited art includes the guide feature, let alone the guide feature being part of a notch in a flap of the pocket connector.

With regard to dependent claim 6, the Office Action rejected the claim as being obvious in light of a combination of Mitsubishi and Bradley. Claim 6 includes language directed towards the use of an optional end located between the first and second ends “wherein the lawn edging strip can be shortened to the optional end.” Moreover, as amended, claim 6 includes “such that disengaging the lawn edging strip from the other lawn edging strip is still hindered in a vertical direction as compared to the force necessary to engage the lawn edging strip with the other lawn edging strip when using the optional end.” It is respectfully noted that the connectors of Bradley (whether the original ends or the optional ends) do not provide hindrance in a vertical direction compared to the force necessary to engage the strips. Thus, the use of the Bradley connection structure does not satisfy these claim limitations. Moreover, the connection structures of Mitsubishi cannot be replicated as optional ends because the connection structure 17 in Mitsubishi relies upon the lack of an edging body being formed in the region below structure 17. Thus, if structure 17 was merely replicated along the length of the edging body, the replicated

connector structures 17 would not work for their intended purpose. Likewise, claim 20 includes "wherein disengaging the lawn edging strip from the other lawn edging strip is still hindered in a vertical direction as compared to the force necessary to engage the lawn edging strip with the other lawn edging strip when using the optional second end location." Thus, the discussion above with regard to claim 6 also applies to claim 20.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and Notice of Allowance are courteously solicited.

Should any additional fees under 37 CFR 1.16-1.21 be required for any reason relating to the enclosed materials, the Commissioner is authorized to deduct such fees from Deposit Account No. 10-1205/EASY:021.

The examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the phone number indicated below with any questions or comments, or to otherwise facilitate expeditious and compact prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,



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